

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION (OE) WORKING GROUP

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Office

Scituate, MA

10:00am to 4:30pm

14 May 2004

MEETING SUMMARY

ACTION: Upcoming meetings

June 17, 2004 - tentative

ACTION: User Group Matrix

Based on OEWG meeting discussions, Anne Smrcina will complete the User Group Matrix and distribute copies to all members within the next two weeks.

ACTION: Action Plan Subcommittees

Five subcommittees were developed to begin drafting the Action Plans:

Whale Watch Certification

- ♦ Cynde Bierman
- ♦ Andrea Thorrold

Media

- ♦ Lou Gainor
- ♦ Andrea Thorrold
- ♦ Tom Clark

Education

- ♦ Andrea Thorrold
- ♦ Nick Micozzi
- ♦ Jack Crowley

Facilities

- ♦ Maureen McConnell
- ♦ Andrea Thorrold
- ♦ Billy Spitzer

Outreach

- ♦ Lou Gainor
- ♦ Jay Michaud
- ♦ Andrea Thorrold

The subcommittees will help to overlap some of the user group tasks, and begin developing action plans for each subject.

Working Group Attendees (May 14, 2004)

Name	WG Seat / Affiliation	Attendance
Richard Wheeler, Chair	CCMNH, Ed WG Chair	Present
Anne Smrcina, Staff Lead	SBNMS, Ed WG Team Lead	Present
William Spitzer	NEAq – V.P. Exhibits/Programs	Present
Tony LaCasse	NEAq – Media Relations Manager	
Maureen McConnell	Museum of Science – Exhibit Planner	Present
Andrea Thorrold	COSEE Coordinator – Woods Hole	Present
Jack Crowley	MME / UMass Dart. / New Bedford Oceanarium	Present
Nicola Micozzi	Science Supervisor – Plymouth Public Schools	
Tracy Hart	Marine Exc. Assoc. – Maine Sea Grant	Present
Jennifer McCann	URI Coastal Research Ctr. / RI Sea Grant	Present
Lou Gainor	Capt. Nautical Talk – WATD Radio	Present
Tom Clark	Principal – Stratagia	
Charles Rasak	Creative Director – Creative Resources Group	
Wendy Northcross	Exec. Dir – Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce	
Kristen McMenamy	Marketing Manager	
Jennifer Ferguson-Mitchell	Public Affairs Deputy Dir. – IFAW	
Christopher Bailey	IFAW	
Sue Moynihan	Dir. of Int.&Cult.Res.Mgmt. – CC Natl Seashore	
Lt. Dean Jones	Public Affairs Officer – US Coast Guard, Dist.1	
Amy Thomas	US Coast Guard, Dist.1	
Jay Michaud	Fisherman / Mar. Surv / MA Lobstermens Assoc.	Present
Cynde Bierman	Sr. Naturalist – Ocean All. / Cp. Ann Whale Watch	Present
Bill Fairbanks	Pres. Hbr. Moor. Serv. / MA Marine Trades Assoc.	

Presentation	
Cynde Bierman	Certification Program

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, ADOPTION OF AGENDA, AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Anne Smrcina opened the meeting and gave an overview of the upcoming tasks for the Outreach and Education Working Group. Introductions were made by all attendees.

Due to conflicts of scheduling, Cynde Bierman and Jay Michaud were unable to attend the first three OEWG meetings, but were able to attend the May 14 meeting:

Cynde Bierman – With Ocean Alliance, and a Senior Naturalist with Cape Anne Whale Watch boats. Currently researching passenger views of whale watch trips. For example, more humpback sightings typically means better ratings. A goal is to learn how watchers intellectually and emotionally respond to the experience.

Jay Michaud – An owner/operator of a fishing vessel, and marine surveyor. Currently involved in a project studying the infrastructure of the fishing industry. How it has changed over time, and how gentrification is affecting these resources.

The OE Working Group needs to begin its Action Plan. This will require determining the needs of Stellwagen Bank, and the needs of each user group. The user group matrix will be completed by Anne

Smrcina and sent to all OEWG members, and a final review meeting will be held. The tentative date for the final review meeting is June 17.

PRESENTATION – CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Cynde Bierman, Senior Naturalist – Ocean Alliance / Cape Ann Whale Watch

Naturalists do not currently have a national association as a central resource. A Naturalist Association of Interpretation and Certification Program would fill this void, and provide a source for learning effective methods of communication and conveying consistent information.

There needs to be a distinction between providing information (e.g., regulations) and providing public awareness, regarding the importance of the Sanctuary. According to the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) [www.interpnet.com], “Interpretation is a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource.”

The NAI has six certificate programs in place:

- ♦ Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)
- ♦ Certified Heritage Interpreter (CHI)
- ♦ Certified Interpretive Manager (CIM)
- ♦ Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)
- ♦ Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT)
- ♦ Certified Interpretive Host (CIH)

A certification program for Whale Watch companies would be as follows:

- ♦ Certified Interpretive Host (CIH): A program designed for owners, captains, mates, galley help, ticket takers, etc.—people who have contact with customers, but are not front-line interpreters.
- ♦ Certified naturalists
- ♦ Other qualifications to be determined

For naturalists, three levels are used:

Level 1 (Material)

- ♦ Sanctuary, its history, management
 - ♦ Whales, dolphins, fish, and other animals
 - ♦ Research, education, and conservation efforts within the Sanctuary
- (No experience necessary for this level.)

Level 2 (Method)

- ♦ Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) Program (Provides a basic understanding of, and ability to apply interpretive techniques to guided talks and informal situations.)
- (A decided upon time of experience required.)

Level 3 (Trainer)

- ♦ Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) Program (Can provide training for incoming naturalists.)
- ♦ Showing mastery of the material

(A decided upon time of experience required.)

Several organizations are already using this certificate program:

- ♦ Monterey Bay Aquarium
- ♦ Cruise West
- ♦ Field Museum in Chicago
- ♦ Texas State Parks (helped create the CIH program)

The program provides an opportunity for Sanctuaries (national and local) to come up with take home messages as well as other important resources that can be applied to a wide variety of uses: schools, NGO's, the press. It also provides a framework for the content of the information that goes out to public. Whale watch naturalists interact with the most people in the Sanctuary itself. The 94 cruise ships scheduled to enter the Sanctuary this year could be provided with similar information to what naturalists are provided. (Someone would need to be available on the cruise ship that could pass on information to passengers.)

The National Marine Sanctuaries should have a single message going out to the public. From that, each individual Sanctuary can have additional messages unique to its own cause. The Sanctuary can provide the content, and the interpretation program can provide the interpretative materials. The method used to present the material is extremely important. Naturalists need to think about how to engage the public. It can be particularly worthwhile for those naturalists who see themselves more as researchers, rather than educators.

Most whale watch boats have full-time naturalists with several years experience, but some have college students/interns. The certification program will require funding, which has not yet been determined. It needs to be done in a way that does not keep people from getting certified. It is a program that should benefit all parties involved.

Discussion – Certification Program

There is some information available regarding the long-term effects of whale watch experiences from surveys, but not much. Currently there is a great deal of interest in educating naturalists to have a long term impact on the public. With children, this might be done by the teachers with a lesson plan given before the trip, and follow-up work after the trip. But it is not an easy sell to the administrators because it is difficult to fit it into the curriculum. There would be a greater chance of it being accepted for a field trip to a history museum, than an off-shore trip to see whales. The focus should be on schools that have the money budgeted and have a strong interest. Charter schools might be a possibility – schools that take a thematic approach.

A whale watch boat permit system has been suggested. In order to enter the area, the boat would need a permit which requires education about the Sanctuary. If it can be shown that visitors will have a better experience, and therefore may come back, then it could work. Surveys have shown that people find it more desirable to go to a national Sanctuary with a certified naturalist, because they feel they will have a better experience. So this, in itself, is good marketing for the system.

GROUP MISSION

The OE Working Group mission is to look for a validated set of strategies and initiatives, then guidelines on how to achieve this. The group also needs to determine if there are other outside groups that could help. Also, the first order of business might be to get a staff person approved to lead the initiative. This group can set up the process to make this happen, and this could be the group's most important task. The Advisory Council would like to see a recommendation come from the working group; this group needs to be adamant about needing an increased staffing level in order to implement its mission.

The program could be a model for other Sanctuaries. And the certification program fits into the National program, so chances are pretty good that additional funding can be acquired for increased staffing.

FISHING INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Whale watching has been the primary focus. But from the fisherman's perspective, there is a great deal more to the Sanctuary. Fresh seafood from Stellwagen is one of the most healthy and nutritious foods available and Stellwagen, in many respects, is the producer of this food. This is actually part of the message that naturalists need to convey. That is, the importance of Stellwagen from the perspective of every user group, including the fishing industry.

Within the fishing community, there is a great deal of distrust of the government, and it is not only financial (e.g., limitations on the number of catches). Fishermen are very in tune with the environment, and are already very knowledgeable about ocean resources. Therefore, it is difficult for them to get keyed up about someone coming in to present a talk from an environmental perspective. They would rather be offered a forum where they can do some of the talking, as they have a lot of pent up frustrations. People believe that they aren't bothered by hurting animals; this is not true, and it can also be costly (e.g., lost equipment can be very expensive). Almost no one out there is intentionally breaking the rules. And if someone does, others don't want to tolerate it as they are going out of their way to do the right thing, so why should someone else get away with something and make it more difficult for everyone?

BETTER TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

There are rumors that the Stellwagen is trying to eliminate fishing in the Sanctuary. This is not true; there needs to be better two-way communication. Currently, the User Group Matrix primarily illustrates one-way communications to the users. It should emphasize a two-way dialog exchange.

The Museum of Science is holding forums where there are a number of issues being addressed. The aim is for the Museum moderator to maintain a balanced view, and not take sides. Forums would probably be much more effective than seminars and booths that simply convey information to the users.

Storytelling is an avenue for communication to the public and to naturalists from the perspective of the fishermen. Interns, volunteers and/or children can be sent out on boats with fishermen and hear stories. They will come back with these stories and experiences, and tell them to others. It could be a very good educational process. It helps to open the lines of communication, and the fishermen are being heard. Stories could also be posted on the Stellwagen website – e.g., “Cool Tales from the Bank.”

The group can look at workshops, forums and planning for attendance at shows, etc... These are opportunities to open the lines of communication. And fishermen should also be involved/present in the development of the Certification Program. Naturalists need to learn the fisherman's point of view.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM EDUCATION PLAN

Much of what the working group is doing at the meetings ties in well with the National Marine Sanctuary System Education plan. This is something from which the group can build. For example, building visitors centers can actually come from a national level education fund (see goal number 4 below). The Education/Outreach Strategy of the National Marine Sanctuary System (NMSS) is as follows:

Vision

People value marine sanctuaries as treasured places protected for future generations.

Mission

To serve as the trustee for the national system of marine protected areas to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy.

Goals

1. Provide leadership for the future of national and international marine science education.
2. The NMSS education is proactive in planning and implementing educational programs at each site and at the national level.
3. The NMSS will build and sustain an effective and efficient education team.
4. The NMSS will develop a network of interpretive facilities that will heighten visitors' experience and convey sanctuary messages.
5. NMSS will strategically build and maintain effective connections with the educational community.
6. The NMSS will equip the education team with the appropriate tools and training necessary to ensure its effectiveness.
7. The NMSS will recognize the significance of education in the program, and will provide and maintain a level of funding that enables the education team to carry out the tasks outlined in this plan.
8. The goal of NMSS is to create communication strategies to protect the nation's marine resources and serve its geographically and culturally diverse communities.

OTHER METHODS OF COMMUNICATION / REVIEW OF THE USER GROUP MATRIX

To target the recreational boater community, local boat shows provide the greatest number of people. (NOAA is typically already there with a booth anyway.) Boat clubs and other community service groups would provide additional sites for speakers. This would actually be useful for almost every user group, and a speaker program could be recommended. Also, Stellwagen has worked with the Coast Guard in the past, to conduct training on boating safety. The program, however, did not sustain but could be reinstituted with more of a commitment to maintain it.

Tide Charts are something that every boater wants. These could be printed with Stellwagen guidelines, tips for safe boating, etc... It is something that will be on the boats for the entire season. And, if the Sanctuary were to partner with the company/organization that prints the chart books, it could potentially cost nothing to get a paragraph printed.

Weather Kiosks – Fishermen would not have much use for these, because they are so weather conscious (e.g., they watch the weather report before they leave the house). But it would probably have great value for the rest of the boaters. These stations are keyed into weather buoys at sea; it is very much tied into public safety. The Kiosks would be another venue for relaying the message.

When looking to large vessels, it is primarily the cruise lines, as they have the biggest potential audience. There are 94 cruise ships scheduled to pass through Stellwagen Bank this year. The central message is the fact that they are passing through the Sanctuary. A method of recognition might be a passport system

that gets stamped for each Sanctuary visited. This might be something that National could do. Another avenue is shipboard television. The message to this group is that Stellwagen exists.

Divers are a very small group, and can be tied into the research community. (Stellwagen is a very difficult area to dive, e.g., depth, amount of fishing, extremely dark, etc...). The User Group Matrix might specify recreational diving if it is to be separate from the research community. The matrix currently suggests hard core science-oriented diving.

Currently, it is not necessary to register or contact anyone to dive at Stellwagen, unless your activities will disturb the seabed or wildlife. So there is really no way to know how many researchers are out there at any given time. But this is actually a topic for the research coordinator.

Stellwagen might work toward being the central source for information on whales (not just a Stellwagen issue). With this, the name recognition issue is accomplished. The website should also provide a clearinghouse of Sanctuary specific information including whale watch information, and data from the research community. There is a great deal of information collected at sea, but currently much of it does not make it back to the Sanctuary. It would be beneficial if at least the bigger events/sightings were reported back to the Sanctuary. (This needs to include not only what researchers are finding, but what other users are seeing such as whale watch passengers.)

Stellwagen might find a way to make it easier for whale watch boat staff to help teachers. For example, staff could be knowledgeable about how the information conveyed relates to the education system's state standards (e.g., the food chain is a natural). Ultimately, the school department needs to get around the table with Stellwagen and come up with the guidelines.

Another group that has not yet been discussed are the party boats, which tend to have a lot of repeat customers (5 or 6 times a year), primarily in the spring and fall. Captain's licenses and marinas are two potential methods of communication. Also, charter fishing boats need to be reached. Most belong to the Massachusetts Striped Bass Association or the Rhode Island Angler's Association. Mailings could be sent with the coast guard fishing licenses (but these only need to be acquired once every five years, so it would not be very effective). The Saltwater Fishing Guide is published by the commonwealth, and it might be a method of getting a message out.

FINAL COMMENTS

To begin the Action Plans, subcommittees have been developed to work on specific topics:

- ♦ Whale watch certification – Cynde, Andrea
- ♦ Media – Lou, Andrea, Tom
- ♦ Education – Andrea, Nick, Jack
- ♦ Facilities – Maureen, Andrea, Billy
- ♦ Outreach – Lou, Jay, Andrea

With these subcommittees, the group can begin to overlap some of the user groups and tasks. For example, recreational fisherman, recreational boating and divers all have a lot in common.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.